

# Emergency Evacuation Plans For Multi-residential Buildings



Office of the State Fire Marshal

RCW 59.19.060 requires multi-residential property owners to provide written notification to tenants about fire protection and building safety, including whether the building has an evacuation plan, and, if so, provide a copy to the occupants.

## 1. Tenants -- Be Prepared Before Fire Strikes

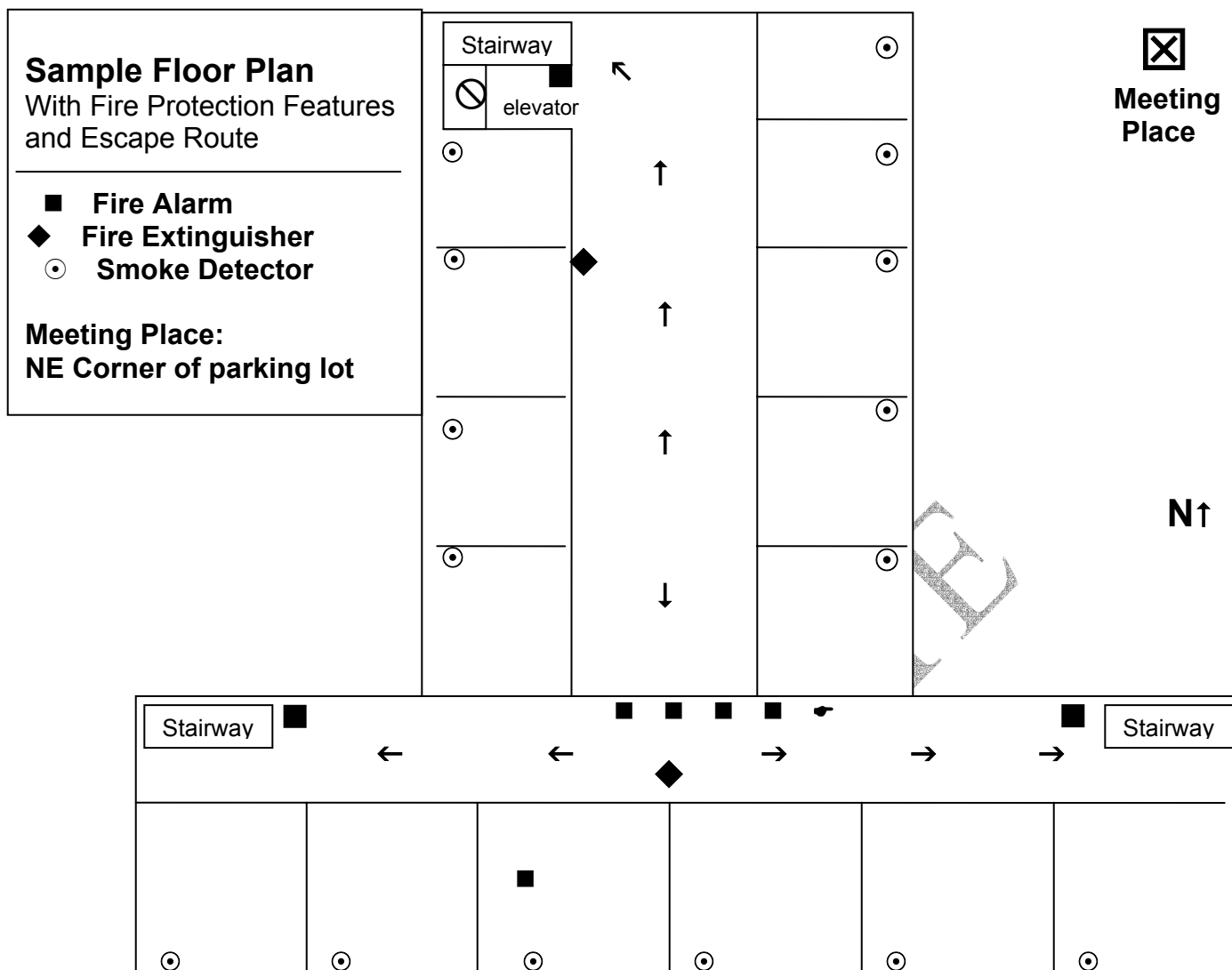
- ☐ **Insurance** – Consider obtaining renters insurance. Take photographs and inventory of valuable items.
- ☐ **Know your building's fire protection system.** - Be familiar with the type of fire protection system in your building. Know the location of fire extinguishers, smoke alarms and/or fire alarm pull stations and know the alarms sounds. Know whether your building is protected by fire sprinklers, and be familiar with the building's public announcement system, if there is one.
- ☐ **Smoke Alarms** – You are responsible for maintenance and testing of your smoke alarms and replacing batteries. Check them monthly by pushing the test button and listening for the alarm. (RCW 48.48.140(3))
- ☐ **Practice a home escape plan** - Know two ways out of every room and your escape route out of the building. Practice your escape plan with your neighbors. Go directly to the assigned meeting place and do not return into the building until directed to do so by the Fire Department.

## 2. In Case of Fire – Know what to do.

- ☐ Don't rush out – into the hallway. Feel the door. If it is hot, use another way out. If the door is cool, leave by the nearest exit.
- ☐ If your building has a public announcement system, listen carefully and follow directions.
- ☐ Never use elevators in a fire. Use the stairs. Close all doors behind you to slow fire spread.
- ☐ Get out and stay out. Go directly to your planned meeting place and stay there. If you think someone is trapped inside, notify the fire department.
- ☐ If you can't escape from your apartment, stuff wet towels, sheets or clothes around the door and vents to keep smoke out. Call the fire department and tell them where your are. If no smoke is coming into the room you're in, open a window slightly both at the top and at the bottom. Stay low and wave a bright cloth, towel or sheet out the window to signal your location.

## 3. Building Owners or Managers – Review procedures

- ☐ Evacuation Plan - Owners or property managers of apartment buildings and condominiums are **required** to develop and provide to tenants a building specific emergency evacuation plan. A sample is included here. It is recommended that one floor plan diagram be posted in a central location on each floor. This plan must be approved by the fire code official. (International Fire Code Chapter 4)
- ☐ Consider including information about accessible fire protection equipment in the building.
  - Location of fire alarm pull stations, if present
  - Location of portable fire extinguishers
  - Location of single station smoke alarms
  - The owner is responsible for installing smoke alarms when required and for ensuring that smoke alarms are operational when a new tenant moves in. (RCW 48.48.140(3))
  - Exit routes from each apartment using the stairs, not elevators
  - Instructions for those tenants unable to leave their units using stairwells
  - Location of outside assembly area for building occupants
- ☐ **Fire Drills – Required for staff of high rise buildings.**  
**Not required for residents, but good practice for all.**  
Annual fire drills are good practice. After the drill, review your emergency plan and make any necessary updates or changes. Keep a record of your drills. This should include the date and time of each drill, as well as the name of the person conducting the drill.



Every alarm must be treated as a fire emergency. If you hear the fire alarm, take these steps to ensure a safe evacuation of the building.

- (1) Leave your unit as quickly as possible, closing the doors as you go.
- (2) Use the stairs, not the elevators, to evacuate the building.
- (3) If you are unable to exit using the stairs, stay in your unit.
- (4) Once outside, move away from the building to designated meeting place.
- (5) Do not go back into the building for any reason until the Fire Department has given permission.